

A 9

SERMON

PREACHED AT

EYAM, DERBYSHIRE,

ON THURSDAY THE 23^d OF APRIL, 1789,

Being the Day appointed for a General Thanksgiving

FOR HIS

MAJESTY'S HAPPY RECOVERY.

BY THE REV. P. CUNNINGHAME, CURATE.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE PARISHIONERS; AND FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE
SUNDAY SCHOOLS, OPENED ON THAT DAY.

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PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY God ! who hast in all ages shewed forth thy power and mercy in the miraculous and gracious deliverances of thy Church, and in the protection of righteous and religious Kings and States professing thy holy and eternal truth : as we do this day most heartily and devoutly adore and magnify thy glorious name for thy great goodness already vouchsafed to us, in “restoring our most gracious Sovereign King George to the ardent prayers of his people, in delivering him from the severe illness with which he hath been afflicted,” so do we most humbly beseech thee to continue thy grace and favour towards us, that no such calamity may ever again fall upon us : give him, we beseech thee, all those heavenly graces that are requisite for his exalted and arduous trust ; let the work of thee his God prosper in his hand ; let his eyes behold the success of his designs for the service of thy true religion established among us ; and grant us to be of one heart and one mind in serving thee our God, and
obeying

obeying him according to thy will : Together with him, bless our gracious Queen Charlotte, His Royal Highness George Prince of Wales, and all the Royal Family. Upon the King, and his Posterity, let the crown for ever flourish,—so we that are thy people, and sheep of thy pasture, shall give thee thanks for ever, and will always be shewing forth thy praise from generation to generation, through Jesus Christ our only Saviour ; to whom with thee O Father, and the Holy Ghost, be glory in the church throughout all ages, world without end.^a

^a Extracted from the services for the Restoration of the Royal Family ; and the Inauguration of the King.

SERMON.

II. KINGS, Chap. xi. Ver. 19, and part of the 20th.

“ And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the King from the house of the LORD, and came by the way of the gate of the guard to the King's house: and he sat on the throne of the Kings.

“ And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet.”

AMONG other unrivalled excellencies of the Holy Bible, it will be allowed, that there are no uninspired compositions, that display the most important events with so much energy, united with such majestic simplicity of style and expression. Such are the powerful and peculiar talents of the sacred writers, that they cause the events which they describe, to have taken place so many ages since, to pass, as it were, under our own observation; thereby feeling a more forcible and solemn instruction on our souls.

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The animated, interesting picture the sacred historian hath portrayed in the chapter, of which the text is a part, may be offered as a proof of the truth of this observation. The portion of it just quoted, will, I doubt not, be *felt* by every loyal British subject, as peculiarly applicable to the circumstances of our present national felicity. Indeed, it may be considered as a very descriptive and faithful counterpart of the religious solemnity, with which the British realm are called upon, this day, to attend, with their Sovereign, the courts of the King of kings. And the occasion that calls for our attendance here, will be considered as a joyful one indeed, by every pious, every grateful mind: It is the solemn "charge and command" of a benignant and exemplary Sovereign, that we should offer up our united "praises and thanksgiving to Almighty God, for that signal interposition of his good providence, which hath removed from him, the late severe illness, with which he hath been afflicted; and which hath established and confirmed in him, the surest trust and confidence, in the divine protection."^b

I shall not therefore, on this happy occasion, detain your attention on that part of the Jewish history, to which the text alludes; but only observe, as a brief illustration of it, that the King referred to was Jehoash. He had been preserved in a wonderful, providential manner, when in the greatest danger, and the most helpless situation, by the vigilant and affectionate cares of Jehoiada the high priest, and of his wife, who was of the royal family of Judah. After concealing him in the temple of the Lord,
for

^b The King's Proclamation.

for six years, -from the vindictive rage of Athaliah,^c who “ had destroyed all the seed royal,” Jehoiada sent and fetched “ the rulers, the leaders, the nobles, the Levites, and the chief of the fathers of Israel,”^d and brought them to him into the house of the Lord; shewed them the young King Jehoash, and placed upon his head the crown^e of his fathers, with the consenting hearts and joyful acclamations of all ranks of the nation. “ He sat on the throne of the Kings, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet.”^f

Considering this portion of holy scripture as a striking representation of our present national felicity; - that we may make an applicable and instructive use of it, let me request your attention to three particulars, which, I would hope, will afford you, on this solemn day of General Thanksgiving, an ample subject for the exercise of joyful devotion, and active gratitude.

1. The first particular which I think it incumbent on me to mention, will naturally claim your consideration, after joining in the solemn service appointed for the day.—It is, the nature of our late national calamity: without a serious reflection upon this, we can form no just idea of the magnitude and importance of our signal, providential deliverance from it.

I do not mean, however, to throw a shade on the heart-enlivening
sunshine

^c II. Kings, ch. 11, ver. 2, 3, &c.

^d II. Chron. ch. 23, ver. 1, 2, 3.

^e II. Kings, ch. 11, ver. 4, 12. ^f ver. 19, 20.

sunshine of this happy day, by dwelling long on that recent affliction, in which the whole realm have borne so cordial, so loyal, and so affecting a part: I only wish to remind you, that our situation was without a parallel in the annals of England, when, as lately, the Lord was pleased “to cover these kingdoms with a cloud in his anger.”^h “Our Harps were turned into mourning, and our organs into the voice of them that weep,ⁱ when the breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord was afflicted, and sore smitten in the day of his fierce anger;^j when he put out the glory of his reason, and cast, as it were, his throne down to the ground.^k His soul was full of trouble, and his life drew nigh unto the grave.”^l

Our Jerufalem was no longer like a city that is at unity in itself; but we were troubled on every side. The evil spirit of discord began to shed her plagues over the land, in “envying, and strife, and divisions;” in “bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking.”ⁿ And, as the Royal Moralist observed, “that, the beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water;”^o no one could say how far, in this case, it was likely to flow; or what the end of these things should be.

But, “the King’s heart is in the hand of the LORD: as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will.”^p “He maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.”^q “He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with Kings are they on the
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^h Lam. ch. 2, ver. 1. ⁱ Job, ch. 30, ver. 31. ^j Lam. ch. 4, ver. 20. ^k Psalm 89, ver. 44.

^l Psalm 88, ver. 3. ^m I Cor. ch. 3, ver. 3. ⁿ Ephes. ch. 4, ver. 31. ^o Prov. ch. 17, ver. 14.

^p Prov. ch. 21, ver. 1. ^q Job, ch. 5, ver. 18.

the throne ; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.”^r Accordingly, when, from the awful nature and circumstances of the Divine visitation, many were tempted despairingly to exclaim,—“Is there no balm in Gilead ? Is there no physician there ? Why then is not the health of the *Ruler* of my people recovered ?”^t When, in the language of Isaiah, thus it was with us the people of this land, “a day of trouble and of perplexity by the Lord God of Hosts :”^t *then* did HE “who giveth salvation unto Kings,”^u “look on the face of his anointed,”^x—cause him to “lift up his eyes unto Heaven,—his understanding to return unto him,—and he blessed the Most High, and he praised and honoured him that liveth for ever : and his counsellors and his lords fought unto him, and excellent majesty was added unto him.”^y He sitteth again on the throne of the kings, his forefathers, trusting in the Lord, protected with the saving strength of HIS right hand, who again “setteth a crown of pure gold upon his head :”^z a crown shining with purer and brighter lustre through a dark night of heaviness and sorrow ; and worn with those Christian graces of piety, humility, resignation and trust in God, with which, the severest trials only the more adorn and exalt the character of the monarch and the man. At *this* “all the people of the land rejoice, and the city—the kingdom—is in quiet.”

2. The Lord hath thus put a new song in our mouths,^a and “our mourning harps are turned to joy.” This is the second particular that I

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would

^r Job ch. 36, ver. 7. ^f Jerem. ch. 8, ver. 22. ^t Isai. ch. 22, ver. 5. ^u Psalm 144, ver. 10.

^x Psalm 84, ver. 9. ^y Daniel ch. 4, ver. 34, 36. ^z Psalm 21, ver. 3. ^a Psalm 40, ver. 3.

would recommend as a fuitable subject for your joyfully devout and grateful confideration on this folemn day ; when you are called upon to “ praife and extol, and honour the King of Heaven, all whose ways are truth, and his ways judgment ;”^b who “ rebuketh and chafteneth as many as he loveth ;”^c who “ healeth thofe that are broken in heart, and giveth medicine to heal their ficknefs.”^d

What St. Paul obferves of the natural body, may very juftly and clofely be applied to the body politic. “ The body is not *one* member but *many*. And the eye cannot fay unto the hand, I have no need of thee : nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. And whether one member fuffer, all the members fuffer with it ; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”^e The hiftory of all orderly, wife, and enlightened ftates will inform us, that this hath ever been the cafe between rulers and fubjects. So intimate, fo complicated is their mutual connexion ; fo clofely, fo effentially are their interefts and welfare united and involved, that the head can never prosper or fuffer without communicating, in fome degree or other, its happy or fuffering influence to the feet—to the loweft, the remoteft parts of the vital, the political union.

Very juftly and affectingly, therefore, may “ ALL the people of *this* land” be faid “ to rejoice,” when thus it hath been done to the HEAD of it,—to the virtuous and beloved King, whom THE KING OF KINGS hath

^b Dan. ch. 4, v. 37. ^c Rev. ch. 3, v. 19. ^d Pfalm 147, v. 3. ^e I. Cor. ch. 12, v. 14, 21, 26.

hath again delighted to honour ;^f and to “ restore to the ardent prayers” of millions of his late afflicted and supplicating people.

“ The city—the realm—is in quiet.” “ Every man sits quietly under his own vine, and his own fig-tree.”^g “ From him that weareth purple and a crown, unto him that is cloathed with a linen frock,”^h *all* are impartially and equitably protected by the golden sceptre of justice and mercy, in the singularly free and unmolested enjoyment of property, of liberty, and of religion. Of that holy religion, so happily established among us, “ a King is *indeed* the nursing-father, and his Queen the nursing-mother.”ⁱ “ Peace reigns within our walls, and prosperity within our palaces.”^j The unexampled extent, the flourishing state of our commerce, embraces “ the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand, the chief things of the ancient mountains, and the precious things of the lasting hills ; the precious things of the earth, and fulness thereof ;^k crowning the cities whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth.”^l No foreign adversaries dare move their tongues against our Israel :^m no weapon formed against us hath prospered.”ⁿ If to these temporal and spiritual national blessings we add those “ which we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, of the noble works that the Lord did for these kingdoms in their days, and in the old time before them,” surely we may take

^f Esther ch. 6, v. 6. ^g I. Kings ch. 4, ver. 25. ^h Eccclus. ch. 40, v. 4. ⁱ Isai. ch. 49, v. 23.

^j Psalm 122, v. 7. ^k Deut. ch. 33, v. 19, 15, 16. ^l Isai. ch. 23, v. 8. ^m Josh. ch. 10, v. 21.

ⁿ Isai. ch. 54, ver. 17.

take up this pathetic apostrophe of the leader of God's favoured people : —“ Happy art thou, O British Israel : who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency ? and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.”^o “ For a small moment hath the Lord forsaken thee, but with great mercies hath he gathered thee. In a little wrath *he* hid his face from thee, for a moment ; but with *signal* and everlasting kindness hath the Lord thy Redeemer had mercy on thee.”^p

In so extensive a field of praise and thanksgiving, it were easy to expatiate ; and particularize a long series of the Divine favours and signal interpositions that have been vouchsafed to this church and nation : but it is time to request your attention to the the third particular, which I observed might afford us, on this day of solemn national thanksgiving, an ample subject to exercise our active gratitude, as well as excite our joyful devotion.

3. Impressed with a lively and grateful sense of your obligations to the Father of Mercies, for those instances of them that have thus been recapitulated, you will acknowledge the propriety of devoting the concluding part of this subject to a consideration of the religious improvement of it. If, therefore, you ask, “What reward shall we give unto the Lord for all the benefits that he hath done unto us ?”^q especially, for “that signal instance of his goodness we joyfully commemorate this day ; his restoring

^o Deut. ch. 33, ver. 29. ^p Isai. ch. 54, ver. 7, 8. ^q Psal. 116, ver. 12.

ing health to our Sovereign, and gladness to his people? I cannot give you a more comprehensive, or more appropriated answer, than in the words of a part of the solemn service of our church, intended for the devout improvement, and due celebration of this auspicious day.—“ I beseech you, brethren, by the *mercies* of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”^r “ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.”^f His omnipresent eye beholds us prostrate in his holy temples for his mercy to our King. If our thankfulness and gratitude can be manifested in any works, that may more peculiarly than others, express the sincerity, and the grateful sensibility of our hearts. What doth THE LORD seem peculiarly on this solemn occasion to require of us? Is it not “ to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God?”^t “ Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house? When thou seest the naked that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?”^u

And here, I would hope, it will be deemed neither foreign to the subject, nor unsuitable to the solemnity of the day, if I should earnestly recommend, as a farther religious improvement of it, another good work

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to

^r Rom. ch. 12, ver. 1, 2. ^f Offertory. ^t Micah ch. 6, ver. 8. ^u Isai. ch. 58, ver. 7.

to your serious consideration and adoption. I mean, a benevolent and effectual encouragement, in establishing among you, those laudable and religious institutions called *Sunday Schools*. Having more than once brought this subject under your consideration, I shall only observe upon this occasion, that you cannot enjoy a more pleasing or seasonable opportunity of manifesting the cordiality of your thanksgiving, and the activity of your gratitude for the happy Restoration of our Sovereign, than by contributing your best endeavours to promote the end of such truly Christian establishments.

By these institutions, a considerable part of the rising generation ; such at least of our neglected and ignorant fellow-subjects as are more immediately within the sphere of your observation and authority, may be timely and happily instructed in their social, moral, and Christian duty ; “ To love their neighbour as themselves,”^x — “ To fear God, to honour the King,”^y “ and to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”^z

Such loyal, such religious endeavours as these, cannot fail to be peculiarly grateful to a Sovereign, who is so generally and deservedly hailed, “ *The Father of his People* :” as such, “ He will have no greater joy than to hear that his subjects,” his children, “ are trained up,”^a and walk in the truth :—the “ grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ.”^b

I know not, therefore, in what better manner I can close the subject we have been considering, than by finally recommending to your imitation,

^x Rom. ch. 13, ver. 9. ^y I. Pet. ch. 2, ver. 17. ^z Tit. ch. 2, ver. 10. ^a III. John, ver. 4.

^b St. John ch. 1, ver. 17.

tion, as a practical and laudable improvement of the whole of it, the fair example of national piety, religious confidence, and religious gratitude, so powerfully recommended by the conduct of your Sovereign himself.

In the emphatical language of his Royal Proclamation for the devout observance of this day,—“He prostrates himself before the Divine Majesty ; and offers up in the most public and solemn manner, his praises and thanksgivings,” “attended by all his princes and his servants.”^c—“The power of his rejoicing realm ;” all that it may justly boast, of royal, noble, venerable, learned, and dignified, “being before him,” uniting in the same solemn duties of joyful devotion, of heart-felt gratitude and praise.

At the thoughts of a spectacle, so truly royal ; convened upon an occasion, at once so happy, solemn, and affecting, one cannot forbear thinking, that we yet hear the animated language of the prophet, blended with the heart felt acclamations of a united and rejoicing people.

“See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen,”—*bath restored*—“that there is none like him among all the people ; and all the people shouted and said, GOD SAVE THE KING !”^d

To HIM, “by whom Kings reign, and Princes decree justice ;”^e To Him who hath done such great things for us already, whereof we rejoice ;”^f To the KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS, be glory, thanksgiving, and praise for ever and ever.

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^c Esther ch. 1, ver. 3. ^d I. Sam. ch. 10, ver. 24. ^e Prov. ch. 8, ver. 15. ^f Psal. 126, ver. 3.

A PRAYER

FOR THE KING'S MAJESTY,

OUT OF THE "LIBER REGALIS."

GOD, the unspeakable Author of the World, Creator of Men, Governor of Empires, and Establisher of all Kingdoms, who, out of the loins of our father Abraham, didst chuse a King that became the Saviour of all kings and nations of the earth; blest, we beseech thee, thy faithful Servant, and our Dread Sovereign Lord, King GEORGE, with the richest blessings of thy grace. Establish him in the throne of his kingdom by thy mighty aid and protection; visit him as thou didst visit Moses in the bush, Joshua in the battle, Gideon in the field, and Samuel in the temple. Let the dew of thine abundant mercies fall upon his head, and give him the blessing of David and Solomon. Be unto him an helmet of salvation against the face of his enemies, and a strong tower of defence in the time of adversity. Let his reign be prosperous, and his days many. Let peace, and love, and holiness, let justice and truth, and all Christian virtues, flourish in his time. Let his people serve him with honour and obedience. And let him so duly serve thee here on earth, that he may hereafter everlastingly reign with thee in Heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SACRED ODE

FOR "THE RESTORATION OF THE KING TO THE ARDENT PRAYERS
OF HIS PEOPLE."

My Harp also is turned to mourning, and my Organ into the voice of them
that weep.

JOB, ch. xxx. ver. 31.

ALL gracious King of Kings ! alone
To thee afflicted Britain prays ;
Hear from redeeming Mercy's throne,
The Father of his people raise.

To bid his night of sorrow fly,
Reason her troubled seat regain,
One healing glance from Mercy's eye,
Oh let a weeping realm obtain.

That glance from thee O Lord ! we crave,
Whose voice rebuk'd the raging wind,^a
Spake peace unto the stormy wave,
And to the sad, distracted mind.

Oh let the pray'r of millions rise
Like incense, to thy courts above,
Call down thy blessing from the skies,
To heal the virtuous king we love :

Our mourning harps *then* turn'd to joy,
Triumphant, grateful hymns shall raise,
And millions their best pow'rs employ,
The Lord of Life and Health to praise.^b

^a St. Matth. ch. 8. ver. 26.

^b The author hopes, that the subjoining to his sermon, the above, and the subsequent Ode, will not be deemed an extraneous publication ; as the one was performed in Eyam, and in most of the neighbouring churches, very frequently, during the King's illness ; and the other, upon the Thanksgiving Day for his Majesty's happy Recovery.

SACRED ODE

ON THE HAPPY RESTORATION OF THE KING TO THE ARDENT PRAYERS
OF HIS PEOPLE.

"Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed : He will hear him from his holy Heaven, with the saving strength of his right hand.

"The King shall joy in thy strength, O Lord ; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice.

"Thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness : Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.

"He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.

"For the King trusteth in the LORD ; and through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved.

"So we that are his people and sheep of thy pasture, will give thee thanks for ever.

PSALMS.

Hallelujah.

"OUR mourning harps *are* turn'd to joy ;"
Let millions their best powers employ,
The Lord of Life to praise.
Great King of Kings ! thy hand we own,
Stretch'd from redeeming Mercy's throne,
Our King belov'd to raise.

Thou

Thou heard'st afflicted Britain's cry,
Bestow'd that glance from Mercy's eye,
A weeping realm implor'd ;
Thou bid'st o'er millions, bless'd again,
" The Father of his People " reign,
To more than life restor'd,

Great Ruler of the Earth and Skies !
Regard the choral hymns, that rise
From Britain's crowded fanes ;
Where, glowing with Devotion's fire,
Pure gratitude and joy inspire
These *universal* strains.

" Long live the King !—the King, whom Heav'n,
" To loyal millions, *twice* hath giv'n ;
" Whose golden sceptre's fway,
" Discordant hearts unite to bless,
" And feel as *theirs*, his happiness,
" Restor'd with Reason's ray.

" Long live the King !—And when his fun
" Of life its bright career hath run
" Of virtue and renown ;
" O King of Heav'n ! amid the blest,
" Reward him in thy realms of rest,
With deathless glory's crown."

G. S. D.



